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TABLE I

War Destruction of Byelorussian Towns

	Population		Estimated percentage destruction
	1939	June 1946	
Minsk	238,772		80
Vitebsk	167,424	62,000	90 - 93
Gomel	144,169		80
Orsha	62,000[1]	34,000	80
Polotsk	30,000[1]	24,000	96
Borisov	88,000[1]	43,000	50

1 Population in 1940, according to UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia.

Sources: Statement by Mr. Ivan Tinchuk, UNRRA Member for the B.S.S.R., August 1945; and UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia, Minsk.

According to the indictment of the Minsk trial of German war criminals, 1,136 hospitals, clinics and first aid centres were destroyed during the occupation. The civilian population received no medical services from the Germans during the war and the incidence of various diseases increased enormously. There was also a drastic increase in infant mortality.

Byelorussian industry has been systematically reduced to rubble. Everywhere the pattern of destruction was the same. Enterprises had been stripped of machinery, and the buildings burned or blown up. Stationary equipment was destroyed or rendered useless.

Agriculture and livestock breeding suffered equally. Millions of farm animals were slaughtered or taken to Germany. Ten thousand collective and state farms were plundered. From machine and tractor stations alone, 8,996 tractors and 1,105 combine harvesters were removed and taken to Germany. (By comparing these losses with the immediate pre-war numbers of 12,000 tractors and 1,600 combines, it can be seen what German occupation meant to mechanized farming in this Republic.)

The destruction of agriculture had severe consequences on the food situation. In May 1945 the Chief of the UNRRA Supplies Department in the Byelorussian Government stated that, while there was no actual [262] starvation, there was serious undernourishment in many areas. UNRRA Mission observers reported that at that time the large majority of the people had little to eat beyond bread, potatoes and UNRRA food. The shortage of fats and oils was particularly acute; in the spring of 1945 the daily fat ration in children's homes was only 20 grams, compared with 100 grams before the war.

727 648 the full tasks of rebuilding homes, restarting industry, and working their farms once more. Therefore, in the summer of 1945 the Soviet Government applied to UNRRA for such assistance and strongly urged that 700 million U.S. dollars be allocated by the Administration for relief work in these two Republics. In August 1945 the Ukraine and Byelorussia were admitted to membership in UNRRA; and on December 18, 1945, after it was determined that they were not in a position to pay with foreign exchange for their own import requirements, agreements were signed between their governments and the Administration providing for the delivery of relief and rehabilitation supplies amounting to 250 million dollars - little more than one-third of the amount requested.

The UNRRA agreement with Byelorussia provided that 61 million dollars would be used to ship food, clothing, medical, agricultural, and industrial supplies to the B.S.S.R. The agreement also stipulated that UNRRA would attempt to deliver the bulk of these supplies to Byelorussia before June 30, 1946; however, because of procurement and transport difficulties, this proved impossible. On May 30, 1946, therefore, the UNRRA-Byelorussian agreement was extended to the end of 1946.

On April 19, 1946, a small UNRRA Mission arrived in Byelorussia and established headquarters at Minsk. The duties of the Mission were to handle problems connected with the delivery of UNRRA supplies, to work closely with the Byelorussian Government in ascertaining the needs of the people, and to observe the distribution of UNRRA supplies. As in all UNRRA countries, the Mission members have complete freedom of movement and observation.

Before the arrival of the Mission at Minsk, 29 ships carrying UNRRA cargoes had already landed at Soviet ports (from December 1945, when UNRRA shipments started, up to April 23, 1946). The Byelorussian Government estimated the tonnage received at 67,680 gross long tons, of which 58,000 tons were food; 3,939 tons, seeds; 3,905 tons, industrial materials; and 1,512 tons were clothing, soap, leather, tarpaulins, and rope. The government also reported that they had taken from the ports and distributed all but 22,000 tons of the supplies received by that time.

Members of the UNRRA Mission making initial observations reported efficient and equitable distribution of the supplies to those sections of the population which suffered most from the war. Practical use was being made of every scrap of material, and there was no evidence of waste. As at April 23, 1946, 40,000 gross long tons of food had been distributed among 12 regions and eight individual towns in Byelorussia. Eleven locomotives had been distributed to nine different points; industrial metals - copper, aluminium, and zinc - had been distributed in six of the war destroyed cities; and over 1,000 tons of seeds, to seven regions of the Republic.

648 262 It was in food supplies that UNRRA was making its greatest contribution. In all the shops, UNRRA food constituted the bulk of the supplies; and apart from bread, cereals, and potatoes, over 90 per cent.

648 of the Byelorussian diet came from UNRRA sources. Meat supplies from
• 262 domestic production were almost nil; fats and oils also were critically short; and little sugar was available, the Byelorussian sugar industry having been completely smashed.

Spring 1946: The Outlook

000 In Byelorussia, 1946 was expected to be a great year for recovery. The new Five Year Plan had just been adopted; UNRRA assistance was getting into full swing; and the relief supplies were filling a wide gap. The food situation was poor but, thanks to UNRRA help, not desperate. Material progress was being made; destroyed houses were being rebuilt, and farming and industry slowly restored.

121 The following sections of this report will try to tell a little of the story of Byelorussia before the war; indicate the damage inflicted by the German invaders and consider Byelorussian reconstruction as it progresses today.

Long Term Rehabilitation Plans

727 On March 18, 1946, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. adopted a
185 series of measures for the long-term rehabilitation of the Soviet Union. Incorporated in the fourth Five Year Plan (1946-1950), these measures were designed to rehabilitate the devastated regions of the country, to recover the pre-war level in industry and agriculture, and then considerably to surpass that level.

Included in the Plan are provisions for capital investments in the Byelorussian Republic of 6,950 million roubles in 1946-50;[1] of this 2,422 million roubles are to be spent for works under the jurisdiction of the Republic. While small in comparison to the 75,000 million roubles estimated war damage suffered by the B.S.S.R., this volume of capital investments is greater than the combined expenditures of 5,741 million made during the three pre-war Five Year Plans, (1928-42). Although some allowance must be made for the lower value of the rouble, the physical goals themselves are also greater.

The new plan contemplates great expansion, but no marked changes in the direction of Byelorussian economic development. Agricultural production is to be revived; and by 1950 the crop area is to be 5,300,000 hectares. Industrial plans for 1946-50 are largely centered in the development of electric power, and peat, brick and other building materials, all of which were well established before the war. One significant trend is to ward the construction of more hydro-electric stations, which in 1950 will produce 12 per cent. of the total power,

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[1] Capital investments for the whole Soviet Union in 1946-50 are fixed at 250,300 million roubles.

V OUTLOOK IN 1947

146 Although there has been no starvation in the B.S.S.R., almost everyone is undernourished. There is still an acute shortage of fats and oils, meat, milk, and sugar. Such of these foods as were available in 1946 were chiefly from UNRRA; and now that UNRRA food shipments have ceased, there will undoubtedly be privation. The shortage of fats and oils will continue until domestic livestock herds are fattened and replenished; in the meantime, only external help will alleviate the scarcity.

262 Much depends on a good harvest this year. Last December the B.S.S.R. Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Krupenya, in a conference with the UNRRA Mission, stressed the importance of increased food production in 1947 - more seeds, more tractors, more farm workers. A part of the interview is reproduced below. Mr. Waller is Chief of the UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia.

Mr. Waller: "In our observations we have seen villages where there was such devastation that the people...had to be helped with food this year. Will the same need exist next year?"

Mr. Krupenya: "In some areas it will not be possible to cover the local needs from the produce of the local farms. The population of extremely devastated areas will stand in need of assistance...The government is making plans to assist them."

Mr. Waller: "What per cent. or number of the village people will need assistance?"

Mr. Krupenya: "It is hard to say exactly, but at least ten to fifteen per cent. of the rural population in Byelorussia..."

Mr. Waller: "Will there be starvation (in the B.S.S.R.) if no aid from outside is forthcoming?"

Mr. Krupenya: "Conditions will be difficult, and aid from outside the Republic will be necessary...Every effort will be made to keep the people from starving."

Mr. Waller: "If no other aid is received from outside, and without further UNRRA assistance, will there be any danger of starvation?"

262 Mr. Kruperya: "The need is so great that some aid will be given...by other Soviet Republics. The increased work on restoration planned for next year will impose additional burdens..." He then added: "The situation is hard after the war. The help received from UNRRA has been great, but after such devastation as was inflicted on Byelorussia, one cannot expect to have appreciable results in one or two years. The time is too short. The results of rehabilitation work done now will be felt later. The situation is still grave this year, and especially so in the villages which suffered most. It cannot be said that there will not be malnutrition. Certain people will not have enough food. There will still be people who do not get enough to eat."